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Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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Decisions adopted by the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women at its 2018 sessions

Contents

Decision number	*Title*	*Page*
Annual session: 19-20 June 2018		
2018/1	Annual Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director on the Strategic Plan 2014-2017	2
2018/2	Report on the evaluation function of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2017	3
2018/3	Report on internal audit and investigation activities for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2017	4
2018/4	Cost Recovery	6
Second regular session: 10-11 September 2018		
2018/5	Structured Dialogue on Financing: Investing in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment through Financing UN-Women's Strategic Plan 2018-2021	6
2018/6	Joint report on cost recovery	8
2018/7	Working methods of the Executive Boards	9

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Decisions

2018/1
Annual Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director on the Strategic Plan 2014-2017

The Executive Board:

1. *Takes note* of the Annual Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director on the Strategic Plan 2014-2017;

2. *Commends* UN-Women on a strong performance to date, and notes with appreciation that UN-Women has reached the majority of the objectives of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017, further takes note of the progress made in the results-based management system and requests UN-Women to continue to improve its efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability;

3. *Takes note of* the increased number of partnerships for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and encourages UN-Women to continue its efforts in this regard;

4. *Encourages* UN-Women to continue to take into account lessons learned from the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017, in support of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021;

5. *Recognizes* the interagency efforts being made to advance the Common Chapter of their strategic plans and requests UN-Women to continue consultations with United Nations funds and programmes on the harmonized format for Common Chapter reporting and asks UN-Women to report on the status of the implementation of the Common Chapter, starting with the annual report for 2018, at the joint meeting of the Executive Boards and at its annual session;

6. *Commends* UN-Women on effectively leveraging its mandate as a composite entity in assisting Member States, upon their request, and in ensuring coherence, consistency and coordination between the normative and operational aspects of its work; and reaffirms the important role of UN-Women in leading, coordinating and promoting the accountability of the United Nations system in its work on gender equality and women's empowerment and on gender mainstreaming across the United Nations System;

7. *Requests* UN-Women to continue to engage with the Secretary-General, other United Nations development system (UNDS) entities and Member States with a view to support full implementation of General Assembly resolutions 71/243 and 72/279, including its contribution to a smooth transition and business continuity of the resident coordinator system;

8. *Requests* UN-Women, as a UNDS entity, to engage with the Secretary-General and Member States to support preparation of a well-thought-out implementation plan for the inception of the reinvigorated resident coordinator system, including on the operationalization of its funding arrangements, to be presented to the General Assembly;

9. *Also requests* UN-Women to present a preliminary analysis of the financial and other implications of resolution 72/279 for UN-Women to the Executive Board at the second regular session 2018;

10. *Further requests* UN-Women, in accordance with resolution 72/279, to provide its contribution to the adequate, predicable and sustainable funding of the resident coordinator system, in line with the forthcoming implementation plan for the inception of the reinvigorated resident coordinator system to be presented to the General Assembly, on an annual basis starting 1 January 2019;

11. *Welcomes* the Executive Director's commitment to implementing resolutions 71/243 and 72/279 and in this regard encourages the secretariat of the UN-Women Executive Board to work together with the secretariats of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF and WFP Executive Boards to produce a joint response to the 2018 joint meeting of the Executive Boards segment on working methods by no later than four weeks before the second regular session 2018, allowing for a consultation process among Member States ahead of that session;

12. *Requests* UN-Women to provide in advance of the second regular session 2018 an overview of funding gaps in relation to the implementation of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, taking into account both regular and other resources, and encourages countries in a position to do so, to increase their contributions, especially to regular resources, to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, and requests UN-Women to be transparent in the use of resources to achieve programme results;

13. *Decides* to transmit the report to the Economic and Social Council.

20 June 2018

2018/2
Report on the evaluation function of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2017

The Executive Board:

1. *Takes note* of the Report on the evaluation function of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2017, and the programme of work and budget for 2018 of the Independent Evaluation Service;

2. *Welcomes* the steps taken by UN-Women to establish a credible and useful evaluation function and its contribution to system-wide gender-responsive evaluation efforts, emphasizes that evaluation should be country-driven and that programme countries' ownership and leadership should be ensured in the evaluation of all forms of assistance, and requests UN-Women, in cooperation with other United Nations system organizations, to continue its efforts to facilitate the building of national evaluation capacities, where applicable;

3. *Requests* UN-Women to ensure the adequate functional integrity and independence of the evaluation function within the Independent Evaluation and Audit Services and to report on how this has been done in its next report;

4. *Expresses* its support for the strengthening of the Independent Evaluation function, including building capacity of UN-Women's evaluation specialists, and requests UN-Women to continue increasing the implementation rate, coverage and use of evaluations and to address the drop in the implementation of management responses in this regard;

5. *Requests* UN-Women to continue the gender-responsive evaluations of country programmes in order to improve programming at country level;

6. *Recognizes* the importance of the evaluation function of UN-Women in providing high-quality, independent and impartial evaluations, and requests UN-Women to take into account the findings of its evaluations in the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021;

7. *Requests* that the Independent Evaluation Service seeks out opportunities with respective evaluation bodies of the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies for joint evaluations of system-wide activities as well as the evaluation of the Common Chapter of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, and calls upon the Independent Evaluation Service and UN-Women to brief the Executive Board at the second regular session 2018 on progress on these matters, including their contributions to the function of system-wide independent evaluation measures;

8. *Takes note* of the progress made on implementing decision 2016/2 which requested UN-Women to enhance the coverage of evaluations, the implementation rate of planned evaluations, financial resources invested in the evaluation function and the submission of management responses to the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation system and use evaluation recommendations in its work; and *further requests* UN-Women to make progress in implementing the recommendations of the Global Evaluation Advisory Committee (GEAC) and to update the Executive Board on progress by the annual session 2019;

9. *Strongly encourages* UN-Women management to work with the Independent Evaluation Service to continue efforts to strengthen the quality and process of corporate and decentralized evaluations, the implementation rate and coverage of decentralized evaluations, and to use the evaluations as learning and knowledge management tools to enhance future programmes and to ensure appropriate resourcing for centralized and decentralized evaluations;

10. *Notes* the decrease in total spending on evaluations and strongly encourages UN-Women to reach the target of allocating 3% of the total UN-Women programme budget to the evaluation function by the end of the period of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021;

11. *Requests* UN-Women to present an oral update to the Executive Board on its new Global Evaluation Strategy, 2018-2021, at the first regular session of 2019;

12. *Takes note* of UN-Women's work in evaluating its contribution to women's political participation and leadership and encourages UN-Women to take into account lessons learnt in its work.

20 June 2018

2018/3
Report on internal audit and investigation activities for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2017

The Executive Board,

1. *Takes note* of the Report on internal audit and investigation activities for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2017;

2. *Notes* the increase in the implementation rate of audit recommendations and the number of audit reports issued in 2017 and encourages the Independent Evaluation and Audit Services to address the lack of audits completed at Headquarters level;

3. *Notes with appreciation* that UNDP/OAI has been allocated appropriate and sufficient resources in the year 2017, and requests UN-Women to continue to allocate sufficient resources to ensure a satisfactory number of internal audits and investigations each year and guarantee the independence of these functions within the Independent Evaluation and Audit Services;

4. *Expresses* its continuing support for further strengthening of governance, risk management, internal controls and accountability at UN-Women and requests UN-Women to strengthen its analysis of the functioning of these key processes in its future reports to assist the Executive Board's understanding;

5 *Expresses* also its continuing support for the audit and evaluation functions at UN-Women, and urges UN-Women management to continue to leverage synergies between the Evaluation and Audit functions of the Independent Evaluation and Audit Services and *requests* UN-Women to provide information on the measures taken to ensure effective linkages between audit and the outsourced investigation function;

6. *Notes* that resource mobilization is a high organizational risk that may affect UN-Women's ability to adequately resource key accountability functions and activities, and in this regard, acknowledges the importance of setting realistic targets and clear assignment of responsibility and accountability for resource mobilization for core and non-core resources;

7. *Recalls* decision 2016/3 in which the Executive Board noted several areas of recurring weaknesses, including the high number of audit recommendations that were corporate in nature, and underscored the importance of progressing with implementation of recurring high priority recommendations;

8. *Reiterates* its concerns about the adequacy of audit coverage and urges UN-Women to follow up on the advice of the OAI and the Audit Advisory Committee to further intensify its efforts to address areas of recurring audit recommendations that pose significant risk, and assessing and implementing appropriate frameworks to support UN-Women's Risk Management and Compliance Functions ("second line of defence") at Headquarters and in the field;

9. *Supports* the "zero tolerance" of the head of UN-Women towards sexual harassment, and appreciates the actions UN-Women has taken so far to prevent and manage sexual harassment, to implement further institutional and cultural changes, and to ensure a joined-up, system-wide, coherent approach;

10. *Requests* UN-Women management, as required under the Secretary General's report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, to present its annual certification to the Executive Board at each annual session, to cover sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment, as appropriate, complementing and strengthening its existing reporting, and to provide updates on progress made in that regard, including working with the United Nations Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate; and further urges UN-Women to consider how to align reporting formats and content with agencies, where appropriate;

11. *Encourages* UN-Women management to undertake, using existing resources under the integrated budget 2018-2021, an independent victim-centred review of its policies and processes on tackling both sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, to review the current practices of UN-Women and provide recommendations on both issues, and requests UN-Women to present the review and associated management response to the Executive Board at its annual session 2019;

12. *Encourages* UN-Women to provide more detail in their future responses to both existing and new audit recommendations, including milestones and targets for implementing changes and improvements;

13. *Requests* the audit and investigation functions to include in future annual reports an analysis of the channels by which allegations of fraud and other misconduct are detected or reported to the investigation function and to provide a more detailed analysis of workplace harassment cases, including sexual harassment, covering the falling number of cases, as well as investigations and actions taken, in its 2019 annual report to the Executive Board;

14. *Takes note* of the Report of the Audit Advisory Committee for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2017;

15. *Encourages* UN-Women to consider the Audit Advisory Committee's recommendations.

20 June 2018

2018/4
Cost Recovery

The Executive Board:

1. *Recalls* decision 2013/2 and subsequent decision 2017/2 in which it was requested that UN-Women, together with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, continues the consultations with Member States about the cost recovery policy and presents evidence-based proposals for harmonized cost recovery policies of UNDP, UNFPA, UN-Women and UNICEF, with adjustments if required, for consideration by the Executive Board no later than its Annual Session in 2018;

2. *Notes* the request of some members of the Executive Board to postpone the presentation of the proposal;

3. *Requests* UN-Women to present the joint cost-recovery proposal report, prepared by UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women, to the Executive Board, at its Second Regular Session in 2018.

20 June 2018

2018/5
Structured Dialogue on Financing: Investing in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment through Financing UN-Women's Strategic Plan 2018-2021

The Executive Board,

1. *Takes note of* the 2018 report on Structured Dialogue on Financing: Investing in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment through Financing UN-Women's Strategic Plan 2018-2021, and encourages UN-Women to continue engaging in a structured dialogue with Member States throughout the year, with a view of assessing the level of funding it receives, and funding gaps, as well as the predictability, flexibility and alignment of financial

resources provided for the implementation of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, without prejudging the outcomes of the Secretary-General's funding compact;

2. *Recognises* the efforts of UN-Women on resource mobilisation and that sufficient regular resources are the bedrock to fully and effectively deliver on the implementation of UN-Women's Strategic Plan, 2018-2021; notes that regular resources enable UN-Women to plan ahead, be responsive and strategic; strengthen their oversight functions (evaluation, audit, and investigation) and accountability; contribute to strengthening UN system coherence and coordination; and leverage other resources to advance gender equality and women's empowerment;

3. *Requests* UN-Women to continue its efforts to improve its efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability and in this regard to continue to provide information on its programme activities, within the proceedings of the Executive Board;

4. *Recognises* that the leadership of Member States in supporting UN-Women and their deepened engagement with and further investment in gender equality and women's empowerment, with guidance of the Executive Board, is essential for the successful implementation of UN-Women's Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, and in this regard notes with appreciation the increasing number of contributors to UN-Women; takes note of the status of regular resources revenue, and urges countries in a position to do so, to increase their voluntary contributions to UN-Women, particularly its core resources, preferably paid early in the year and/or in a timely manner, and, if possible, through multiyear pledges;

5. *Encourages* countries, in a position to do so, to provide timely and flexible Other Resources (earmarked) aligned with the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021;

6. *Requests* UN-Women to continue improving the format and content of the report on Structured Dialogue on Financing, in order to further improve the quality of the Structured Dialogue on Financing, including by providing an overview of the funding in relation to the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, taking into account both regular and other resources;

7. *Encourages* UN-Women to continue working jointly with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF to improve collaboration on structured funding dialogues;

8. *Welcomes* the commitment of UN-Women, in close collaboration with the Secretary-General's transition team and other programmes, funds and specialised agencies, to implement General Assembly Resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018 on repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system; also welcomes the updates provided with preliminary analysis of the financial and other implications of the resolution and requests UN-Women to continue to engage with the Executive Board in this regard, providing regular updates as from 2019;

9. *Recalls* Executive Board Decision 2018/1 on the Annual Report of the Under Secretary-General / Executive Director on the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, and requests UN-Women to double its contribution to the existing United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) cost-sharing arrangement, in accordance with General Assembly Resolution 72/279, to deposit its 2019 contribution as soon as possible, taking into account the Secretary-General's implementation plan, in order to operationalise the new resident coordinator system from 1 January 2019, and to report on progress in this regard to the Executive Board at the annual session 2019;

10. *Requests* that UN-Women, as part of the UNSDG, collaborate with the Secretary-General's transition team to support the establishment of a system-wide approach to implementing all the funding modalities set out in General Assembly Resolution 72/279, including the levy, and to report to the Executive Board at the first regular session 2019;

11. *Requests* that UN-Women present clear, transparent information on its contribution to resident coordinator funding modalities to the Executive Board at the annual session 2019;

12. *Calls on* UN-Women to review its planning, financing and results reporting processes to ensure effective joint collaboration in the context of the revitalised UNDAF, and to provide an update at the next session of the Executive Board on required adjustments;

13. *Request* UN-Women to regularly update the Executive Board on the ways it supports the work of the Resident Coordinators, and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, on matters related to gender equality and the empowerment of women, in accordance with its mandate, as well as on the implications of the new generation of UN country teams, as mandated by General Assembly Resolution 72/279, on its regional architecture and country set up.

11 September 2018

2018/6
Joint report on cost recovery

The Executive Board,

1. *Recalls* Executive Board Decision 2013/2, which endorsed the current harmonised cost recovery policy and in this regard recognises and welcomes the efforts of UN-Women, together with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF in implementing the policy, and in which the Executive Board directed the Entity to implement the cost recovery policy and ensure full cost recovery proportionally from regular and other resources funding sources, and provide incentives to increase regular resources funding;

2. *Recalls* Executive Board Decision 2017/2;

3. *Takes note of* the Joint UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women report on cost recovery (DP/FPA-ICEF-UNW/2018/1) and the two proposals for the recovery of indirect costs presented therein;

4. *Notes* paragraph 28 (d) of General Assembly Resolution 72/279, which calls for a further harmonisation of cost recovery by individual United Nations development system entities, and in this regard, commends UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women for their harmonised cost recovery framework and encourages them to work with other entities of the United Nations development system, after due consideration by their respective governing bodies, to adopt a harmonised cost recovery framework;

5. *Requests* UN-Women, together with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, to jointly review existing cost definitions and classifications of activities and associated costs, with a view to further harmonise their approaches by determining common definitions of cost categories and corresponding activities and functions at a granular level, while taking into account the different business models of the individual entities, which allows for a full understanding of each categories' composition, options for possible alignment of similar functions to the same cost classifications across entities, and continues to provide a basis for comparisons among

entities, as well as alignment with their strategic plans, to be presented to the Executive Board for decision at its second regular session in 2019;

6. *Reaffirms* in this regard the current harmonised cost recovery policy and requests UN-Women, together with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, to present a preliminary comprehensive proposal on the cost recovery policy for consideration by the Executive Board at its first regular session in 2020, with a view to present a final comprehensive proposal for decision of the Executive Board at its second regular session in 2020;

7. *Requests* UN-Women, together with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, to reduce the granting of waivers lowering the agreed cost recovery rates, and to provide an update on the steps taken in this regard, including on the application of waivers across their organisations, to the Executive Board at its annual session in 2019;

8. *Requests* UN-Women, together with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, to review in a comprehensive manner, cost recovery rates as part of the comprehensive proposal;

9. *Requests* UN-Women, together with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, to present an assessment of the reasons why full cost recovery is not currently being achieved, as part of the comprehensive proposal.

11 September 2018

2018/7
Working methods of the Executive Boards

The Executive Board,

1. *Reaffirms* the rules of procedure of the Executive Board of UN-Women;

2. *Takes note* of the joint response prepared by the secretariats of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Children's Fund, and the World Food Programme to their respective second regular sessions 2018;

3. *Requests* the UN-Women Executive Board Secretariat to circulate draft decisions at least two weeks prior to the session so that the draft decisions are available at the pre-session, and strongly encourages the President to appoint, at that time, the facilitators for the respective draft decisions, in full respect to equitable regional representation, and in this regard strongly encourages Member States to provide their comments on draft decisions, if possible, prior to the first informal consultations, with a view to starting informal consultations on the draft decisions a working day in advance of the session;

4. *Requests* UN-Women and the Members of its Executive Board to make efforts to start all formal and informal meetings on time and to plan them during United Nations working hours and avoid parallel consultations to better facilitate the effective and constructive participation of all Member States in the work of the Executive Boards;

5. *Also requests* the UN-Women Executive Board Secretariat to identify a set of common agenda items, together with UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, UNICEF, and WFP, with a view to harmonising the consideration of those agenda items with these agencies, beginning from the first regular session 2019 onwards;

6. *Further requests* the UN-Women Executive Board Secretariat to develop, in consultation with UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, and UNICEF, a joint online calendar of all Board meetings, to be updated in real time and made available to the Executive Board;

7. *Requests* UN-Women management to provide a written response to questions raised at informal consultations on the reports (informal briefings), upon request by Member States, before the start of the following formal session;

8. *Requests* UN-Women to continue to enhance documentation in order to make it more strategic and analytical, and to include best practices, actions being taken to address lessons learned, challenges and risks, building on the interactions with the Board, as appropriate;

9. *Requests* UN-Women to further enhance accessibility and ensure that Executive Board documents' file names are clearly spelled out and indicate the documents' content, that these documents can be downloaded in their entirety by agency, and that they include full text searchability;

10. *Requests* UN-Women to engage with the Executive Board, and with UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, UNICEF, and WFP, on the efficient and effective implementation of the guidelines for Executive Board field visits and reporting requirements;

11. *Requests* UN-Women and its Bureau to give due consideration to gender balance in panels for all meetings;

12. *Requests* the Bureau of UN-Women, in collaboration with the Bureaux of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, and WFP, to launch a joint consultative process with Member States starting at the first regular session 2019, with a view to examining the efficiency and quality of its current sessions, as well as the functions of the joint meeting of the Boards, building on the joint response prepared by the secretariats.

11 September 2018